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T U E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council extends UNFICYP mandate until 30 June 1996; urges reduction in number of foreign troops and cut in defence spending in Cyprus.

* Security Council expresses strong support for Secretary-General's efforts to enhance United Nations capacity to plan, deploy and sustain peace-keeping operations.

* Security Council welcomes Secretary-General's recent report on Western Sahara as sound framework for efforts to accelerate and complete voter identification process.

* UNPROFOR to hand over military responsibility in Bosnia and Herzegovina to IFOR tomorrow; Secretary-General says peace-keepers did their job well.

* Haitian election took place in calm and orderly fashion without serious incidents of violence, OAS Election Observation Mission reports.

* Representatives of Greece and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia meet together with Envoy Cyrus Vance; agree to continue direct discussions in New York on 11 January.

* Guatemalan Government and URNG conclude final negotiating session for 1995 in Mexico City.

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The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for a further period ending on 30 June 1996. By unanimously adopting resolution 1032 (1995), the Council called on the military authorities on both sides to ensure that no incidents occurred along the buffer zone and to extend their full cooperation to the Force. It requested the Secretary-General to keep under review the structure and strength of UNFICYP with a view to its possible restructuring and to present any new considerations he might have in that regard.

(more)

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The Council expressed concern about the continuing modernization and upgrading of military forces in the Republic of Cyprus and the lack of progress towards a significant reduction in the number of foreign troops there. It urged all concerned to commit themselves to such a reduction and to a reduction of defence spending in the Republic.

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In a second meeting today, the Security Council expressed strong support for the Secretary-General's efforts to enhance the capacity of the United Nations for the planning, rapid deployment and reinforcement and logistical support of peace-keeping operations. In a Presidential statement, the Council noted with interest and appreciation the Secretary-General's report of 10 November on stand-by arrangements for peace-keeping.

The Council encouraged Member States not yet doing so to participate in the stand-by arrangements. It invited all States to provide information in as detailed a manner as possible on those elements which they were ready to make available to the United Nations. The Council also invited them to identify components, such as logistic support elements and sea/airlift resources, presently under-represented in the arrangements.

The Council welcomed the Secretariat's initiative for the creation of a stand-by Headquarters component within the Mission Planning Service of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. It also joined with the Secretary-General in the establishment of partnerships between those troop-contributing countries that needed equipment for units that may be provided to the United Nations and those Governments ready to provide such equipment and other support.

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In another action today, the Security Council reiterated its commitment to the holding, without further delay, of a free, fair and impartial referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in accordance with the Settlement Plan. It welcomed the Secretary-General's report of 24 November as a sound framework for his ongoing efforts aimed at accelerating and completing the identification process. It welcomed further his decision to intensify consultations with the two parties in order to obtain their agreement to a plan to resolve differences hindering the timely completion of the identification process.

By unanimously adopting resolution 1033 (1995), the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the results of those consultations on an urgent basis. In the event the consultations failed to reach agreement, he should provide the Council with options for its consideration, including a programme for the orderly withdrawal of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The Council called on the two parties

to work with the Secretary-General and MINURSO in a spirit of genuine cooperation to implement all other aspects of the Settlement Plan, in accordance with relevant resolutions.

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The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) will hand over responsibility for military activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Implementation Force (IFOR) tomorrow. In a statement issued today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said United Nations personnel had worked for more than three years to contain the Bosnian conflict and alleviate civilian suffering. They had not been sent to Bosnia to stop the war, but had been asked to shoulder the blame for the lack of peace.

United Nations troops had teamed up with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to deliver humanitarian supplies that kept the country alive, the Secretary-General noted. In the process, 110 peace-keepers had died, over 800 had been wounded and hundreds had been taken hostage. "They did their job; they did it well," he stressed. "This should not be forgotten."

The United Nations had given its full support to the incoming NATO-led troops in order to bring about a seamless transition, he continued. It would continue to work in Bosnia in the civilian sector as part of a determined international effort to make the peace process succeed. With wise leadership, the peoples of Bosnia could make their country whole again. In that effort, they could count on the continued support of the peoples of the United Nations.

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Voting in the Haitian election on Sunday took place in a calm and orderly fashion without serious incidents of intimidation or violence, according to the Organization of American States Election Observation Mission (OAS/EOM). Deployed throughout Haiti, the Mission's 150 teams were able to visit over 20 per cent of all polling stations.

Haiti's Electoral Council had considerably improved the organization and management of the electoral process, the Mission noted. All the polling stations visited were open and receiving voters. Electoral agents appeared, in general, to have been well-trained and aware of the procedures required.

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Pursuant to the Interim Accord of 13 September 1995, representatives of Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia met together on Friday with the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Cyrus Vance. The parties

exchanged views on various aspects related to the further implementation of the Interim Accord, in particular Article 5. The meeting took place in a cordial and businesslike atmosphere and lasted for several hours.

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Vance had met separately with each of the representatives. In response to his invitation, both agreed to continue their direct discussions under his auspices in New York on 11 January 1996.

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The Guatemalan Government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) have concluded their final negotiating session for the year in Mexico City, according to a United Nations spokesman. In order to facilitate the continuation of the negotiating process after the new Government takes office, the parties evaluated the work undertaken since April on "socioeconomic aspects and the agrarian situation". They produced a working document showing the points of convergence and divergence still existing on the issue.

Both parties underlined the significance of the agreements that had been signed and the importance of full compliance with them. They reiterated the value of the negotiating process as a means of ending the armed conflict and the need to ensure continuity next year until a final peace agreement was signed.

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